



Environmental Laboratory Advisory Committee (ELAC) Final Meeting Minutes: February 10, 2005

Editorial Note: Information communicated in these minutes is not to be used as official New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection policy or as an official Department notification. Contact NJDEP officials directly for official information regarding matters communicated in these minutes.

Administrative Business

Chair Harvey Klein (GSL) called the meeting to order at 9:37 AM. Phil Worby (QCLabs) requested a correction to the question asked under the NELAC/INELA Update section about the new FoPT parameters requiring 2 out of 3 passes prior to the effective date of June 1, 2005. There was some discussion on whether the testing must be completed by June 1, 2005 and Dr. Mike Miller (NJDEP-OQA) confirmed that you must be compliant by June 1, 2005 with Raeann Haynes (Oregon-DEQ). A motion was made to accept the minutes and was seconded.

Subcommittee Reports

Laboratory Certification Program: Mike Dibalsi (NJDEP-OQA) announced that the drinking water study suspension letters should go out in mid-May. The PT contract has not been awarded as of this date. The Solid Hazardous Waste study has been postponed. Mr. Dibalsi (NJDEP-OQA) announced that the PT schedules are up to date on the OQA website. The FY06 renewal forms should be sent out by March 1, 2005.

Joe Aiello (NJDEP-OQA) stated that the department is attempting to change the billing for PT studies to reduce the invoice number from three to one. Harvey Klein (GSL) asked whether payment will be allowed over a time period. Mike Dibalsi stated that this was not planned but might be offered as an option. Phil Worby (QCLabs) asked if the payment is made will a refund be issued if the lab drops that program. It was discussed that flexibility will need to be built into the billing system.

Joe Aiello announced that he will be working on a proposal for a new fee schedule for New Jersey laboratory certifications. He requested that any stakeholders who are interested in working with him on the fee schedule contact him immediately as he wants to submit a proposal in two months. Joe Aiello stated he wanted to avoid the problems encountered by New York where a problem with assessed fees has triggered a lawsuit with requests for fees to be readjusted and reimbursements to be issued. Harvey Klein suggested that an email be sent to the ELAC mailing roster to notify as many parties as possible within a short timeframe. An email was sent on February 15, 2005 to the ELAC mailing roster by Carol Conklin (OCUA).

PT program: Dr. Mike Miller (NJDEP-OQA) informed the committee that only ERA and NYSDOH have submitted their soils VHS data. The other PT providers have not submitted their data. Phil Worby (QCLabs) asked if the PT committee has asked for that data. Dr. Miller replied that the information had been requested. Dr. Miller said there is new language concerning soils data that addresses the problem of the true value not being within the range

of acceptable results. He stated that the true value must be within the range and the recovery must be at least 10%. He stated that problems can occur when the ranges are chosen randomly. Dr. Miller informed the committee that multiple PT concentrations have been proposed for metals, mercury and PAH's.

NELAC/INELA Update: Dr. Mike Miller states that INELA had no standard ready for NELAC to consider at its February meeting. INELA's standard was written with ISO17025 language which requires a fee to be paid for its use. INELA must rewrite their standard using ISO17025 as a reference only.

Dr. Miller states NELAC is still undergoing a process of separating policy and procedures from standards. There is a standard review committee. The PT board is evaluating a PTOB/PTPA candidate. An operating PTOB/PTPA may be in place by the August NELAC meeting.

Dr. Mike Miller (NJDEP-OQA) stated that a special committee has been initiated to help NELAC become self-sufficient. The Office of Research has been supplying approximately 1-11/2 million dollars per year to support NELAC. The US EPA issued three requests for proposals worth about 750,000 dollars over a 5 year period. One for NELAC training has been issued. The two other requests are for the development of a system to administer the NELAC-NELAP program and a system to support the development of environmental standards. The responses to these proposals are being evaluated by the EPA.

Harvey Klein (GSL) introduced the PT analysis policy that Dave Speis (Accutest) requested to be attached to the January meeting minutes. Dr. Mike Miller stated that document was written in response to the results of audits of PT providers. Dr. Miller says PT providers are not allowed to create QC samples specifically designed for a particular type of PT sample and then advertise that QC sample for that purpose. Harvey Klein discussed the section of the PT analysis policy that states that PT samples may not be analyzed multiple times. He stated that PT samples are not routine samples. He gave the example of a VOA sample for a PT analysis that would contain 20 different analytes. He stated that the sample would need to be diluted and analyzed again to meet concentration ranges for some parameters. Greg Tomkovich (Accutest) voiced a concern about having a procedure for testing of low-level samples under this policy. Dr. Mike Miller stated that the best way to fix this problem is to match concentration ranges to the needs of that parameter. Dr. Miller stated the purpose of the policy is to standardize auditing among the 13 different NELAC programs. Greg Tomkovich (Accutest) asked when the holding time is initiated. Dr. Miller stated the holding time would begin when the vial is broken and the sample diluted. Harvey Klein recommended that testing instructions should be sent out with the PT samples.

NJQL's: Dr. Mike Miller (NJDEP-OQA) stated that problems with error checking on the NJQL database were being addressed. They still are hoping to have a beta test date in March 2005. Several concerns about the reporting of mdl data were voiced. Greg Tomkovich (Accutest) and Terry McIntyre (Merck) stated that some GCMS analytes were so precise when performing the mdl's that the 10X factor was exceeded. Carol Conklin (OCUA) asked if mdls outside the 3-5X range of the spike standard would prohibit reporting of that mdl data on the database. Dr. Miller stated this would continue to be discussed. She asked

if the input would be restricted to seven data points with the analysis date. Dr. Miller stated that was correct.

Bioassay: No report

By-Laws: No report

Sludge (Biosolids): No report

Communications and OQA Website: Harvey Klein (GSL) reported that corrections had been made to the dates on the ELAC meeting section of the OQA website.

Old Business

Bureau of Safe Drinking Water: No report

PWTA: No report

New Business

Announcements: Harvey Klein (GSL) mentioned the information contained in a recent NJBIA newsletter about a TRIAD course being offered on February 17, 2005. This training is usually made available to members of interested laboratories. Labs should contact Brian Sogorka (NJDEP-SRWM) for more information on this training. Harvey Klein also informed the committee of a New Jersey environmental newsletter called Garden State EnviroNet with a website at <http://www.gsenet.org>.

There were not any other new issues. The meeting adjourned at 11:40 AM.

The next meeting is scheduled for 9:30AM on March 10, 2005 – 4th Floor Conference Room.

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